



## *The Old Ironsides Report*

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### **New Bridge Joins Separated Communities in Baghdad**

**Story and Photo by Spc. John S. Wollaston**

**1AD PAO**

BAGHDAD IRAQ – For nearly 20 years, the people of the Ghazalyia and al-Shu'lah districts of Baghdad had pleaded for a new bridge to connect their neighborhoods. Instead, all they received from the regime of Saddam Hussein was silence and a foul smelling 30-foot wide river of raw sewage to keep the districts separated.

But that's all changed now.

Exactly one month after the ground breaking, a ribbon cutting for the new Hamza Bridge was held with nearly 200 local residents and several local officials on hand to participate in the ceremony.

Through the joint effort of engineers from the 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division's Company B, 70th Engineer Battalion (Combat) and local Iraqi contractors, the districts that were separated for so long have, quite literally, been bridged.

"The people have been very happy about this project from the start," said 1st Lieutenant John Prettyman, the platoon leader for Co. B's 3rd Platoon and project coordinator for the bridge. "When we told them we were building a bridge for them, the people offered us food, security, anything we needed. They've been really supportive."

The bridge itself is a four-lane affair with sidewalks on either side to allow pedestrians as well as traffic to cross in both directions.

Drainage pipe was laid into the foundation to re-direct some of the sewage that formed a barrier river between the two areas. A little more than 400,000 cubic meters of sewage was removed to allow the bridge to be completed.

As an offshoot of the bridge project, a sewage pump station is being rebuilt to drain the remainder of the harmful liquid from the trench.

Not only will this bridge bring two formerly hard to access sections of Baghdad together, there's economic and traffic flow issues that are improved with the opening of the new bridge. At its north end is the al-Shu'lah market area, which will benefit from increased access.

"Before we started this project, traffic was completely at a standstill by noon," Prettyman said.

He estimates that with the opening of the bridge, traffic congestion has been reduced by between 34 to 45 percent.

Even more amazing that the bridge itself was the cooperation between the Army and local Iraqi contractors to get the project done.



**The ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Hamza Bridge was attended by almost 200 local residents and officials.**

Very little hands-on building of the bridge was done by the engineers. The labor and materials came from the Iraqi people.

"We provided as much support as we could," Prettyman said. "The rest was done by the locals."

The success of the partnership in building the Hamza Bridge bodes well for future joint projects in the area, Prettyman said.

"We're not going to stop here," Prettyman added with a smile. "This is just the first step."

#### **A Smart Tip From 1AD Safety**

##### **Senior vehicle occupants will:**

- ✓ **Be responsible for the safe operation of the vehicle.**
- ✓ **Replace drivers who appear fatigued or physically, mentally or emotionally impaired.**
- ✓ **Ensure that all occupants use available restraint systems.**
- ✓ **Assist the driver in recognizing unsafe conditions/situations and ensure correction before resuming or continuing operation.**
- ✓ **Ensure that personnel wear personal protective equipment (hearing protection, goggles, helmets, etc.) as required by vehicle type.**

## NEWS

### **U.S. Jets Bomb Suspected Taliban Hideouts**

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP) - U.S. fighter jets and helicopters bombed suspected Taliban hideouts Thursday in Afghanistan's rugged southern mountains following intense battles between the insurgents and Afghan troops, officials said. The troops were trying to flush out the Taliban from Zabul province when the guerrillas attacked with heavy machine guns in the Chinaran Mountains, said Haji Granai, an Afghan military commander, speaking to The Associated Press by satellite telephone from Chinaran.

### **Nature, Visitors Taking Toll on Titanic**

BOSTON (AP) - When Robert Ballard discovered the Titanic on the North Atlantic seabed in 1985, he was amazed at how well-preserved it was and predicted the wreck would change little in his lifetime. But scientists and other experts now say that the wreckage - almost covered with corrosive microbes after seven decades under the salty water - is decaying so fast that the 100-foot forward mast has collapsed nearly a decade earlier than previously predicted.

### **Dow Sinks 50 Despite Upbeat GDP Report**

NEW YORK (AP) - Investors looked past a pair of upbeat economic reports Thursday, sending stocks lower amid concerns that an improving business climate has already been factored into Wall Street's higher prices. "The market is the greatest forecasting tool out there. Stocks have been forecasting these results," said Gary Kaltbaum, market technician for Investors' Edge Partner, a money management firm in Orlando, Fla.

## SPORTS

### **Agassi, Capriati in Action at U.S. Open**

NEW YORK (AP) - A second-round match featuring No. 2 seed Justine Henin-Hardenne of Belgium against Croatia's Silvija Talaja highlights the day session of the U.S. Open on Thursday. Later Thursday, No. 6 Jennifer Capriati will face Slovakia's Martina Sucha and top seed Andre Agassi will meet Andreas Vinciguerra of Sweden.

### **Oddly Enough:**

### **There's a New George Bush in Baghdad**

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) -- A Baghdad mother and father, to show their thanks to President Bush for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, have named their son after the American leader. Had the couple had twin boys, they say, they would have named them George Bush and Tony Blair. The new George Bush - probably the only one in Baghdad - was born six weeks ago to Nadia Jergis Mohammed, 34, and her husband Abdul Kader Faris, 41. "I tell you all Iraqis hated Saddam's regime. It was only George Bush who liberated us, without him it wouldn't have happened. If he hadn't done it the sons of Saddam would have ruled us for years. He saved us from Saddam and that's why we named our son after him," Mohammed told Associated Press Television News. The little George Bush was seen screaming in his crib. Baby Bush, born July 11, carries the full name George Bush Abdul Kader Faris Abed El-Hussein. He weighed 7 pounds 11 1/2 ounces at birth. Two older brothers are named - more traditionally - Omar and Ali.

### **Chaplain's thought for the day:**

#### ***Thunder is Good***

Thunder is good, thunder is impressive; but it is the lightning that does the work.

--Mark Twain

Thunder demands our attention. From the ear-splitting boom overhead to the faint rumble in the distance, it is an impressive part of nature. Yet, it is the lightning that discharges electricity from one cloud to another, or to the earth. We are sometimes like thunder. We may shout our intentions to our soldiers, or quietly tell our dreams to friends. No matter how we say it, it is the ability to follow through that is most important. When we've completed what we've set out to do, we will feel a sense of satisfaction and energy. With this energy, and the knowledge we can finish what we set out to do, we will make our dreams come true.

### **On This Day In History:** **August 29<sup>th</sup> 1862**

Confederate General Robert E. Lee deals a stinging defeat to Union General John Pope at the Second Battle of Bull Run. Frustrated with McClellan, who was still camped on the James Peninsula southeast of Richmond, President Lincoln and General-in-Chief Henry Halleck decided to pull a substantial part of McClellan's Army of the Potomac and send it to General John Pope's Army of Virginia. Lee sent General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson north to keep an eye on Pope's force. When it became clear the Yankees were abandoning the peninsula, Lee moved more of his force northward to defeat Pope before reinforcements arrived. The plan worked, and Jackson raided a major Union supply depot at Manassas. Realizing that the Confederates were split, Pope began to pursue Jackson, but he could not find the Rebel force. A confused Pope marched troops back and forth for two days. After an initial battle on August 28, Pope attacked, but his army did not fare well. The Confederates mauled the Union troops, and by August 30 Pope had to retreat. His army lost over 16,000 men to the Confederates' 9,000.

Source: [historychannel.com](http://historychannel.com)